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The impact of tourism on socio-economic development in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract: The importance of tourism to nations' socioeconomic development cannot be overemphasised as it has proven to be a significant source of revenue for many countries globally. However, sub-Saharan nations like Nigeria have not tapped into the unlimited potential of tourism in their development drive, hence the continuous grappling with underdevelopment challenges. This study examines how tourism impacts socioeconomic growth in Nigeria, focusing on well-known tourist destinations in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopts quantitative and qualitative mixed-method research using survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews to elicit responses from visitors at the tourist centres and the tourists' operations. Data were analysed using simple percentages of frequency distribution tables and thematic analysis. The Neo-liberal theory was adopted as a theoretical framework for the study. The findings highlight the need for better infrastructure, security measures, destination awareness, better housing, financial help, the development of a competent workforce, solid governmental policies, the conservation of cultural and natural assets, and encouragement of collaboration. Future studies may focus primarily on three areas: the evaluation of tourism's economic impacts, the effectiveness of specific tourist development programs, and the role of tourism in community empowerment.

Keywords: tourism; socioeconomic development; assets; culture; Nigeria

1. Introduction

Tourism significantly contributes to socioeconomic growth, particularly in developing nations (Manzoor et al., 2019). Nonetheless, regardless of the almost universal acceptance of tourism as a development option, the extent to which economic and social development inevitably follow the establishment and advancement of a tourism sector remains a topic of intense discussion (Sharpley and Telfer, 2015). It is often seen as a catalyst for socioeconomic growth, particularly in less-developed countries (LDCs) and peripheral and/or rural regions. Tourist development is also considered a key pillar for fulfilling the UN Sustainable Development Goals; poverty, hunger, gender disparities, and environmental degradation may all be eased via sustainable tourist development. On the other hand, tourism development creates social, environmental, and cultural damage. As a result, while tourist growth can considerably influence communities, its function and impact are debatable (Cerisola and Panzera, 2024; Kozic et al., 2013).

While the benefits of tourism are debatable, it cannot be denied that tourism increases agricultural production and employment, generates foreign exchange, generates government revenue, finances infrastructure development, and generally improves citizens' welfare. Tourism also enables financial growth, particularly with overseas vacations, and promotes general economic growth (Manzoor et al., 2019).

The tourist industry has the potential to generate significant foreign exchange revenues; it is the third-largest export sector after energy and chemicals. According to the UNWTO (the World Tourism Organization), tourism contributed 7% of global commerce in 2019, making it the world's third-largest export industry (Chukwudiebere, 2022). Nevertheless, current government tourism reform initiatives mirror old ideas even in these new times. Nigeria has sustained a critical approach that defines tourism narrowly as arts and culture, with little focus on other components such as the environment and conservation (Muhammad and Muhammad, 2014).

While other African nations have expanded their tourist offerings to meet global standards, Nigeria's strategy remains confined to the past (Dieke, 2020). Hence, the nation has failed to invest in arts and culture and, therefore, has been unable to capitalise on its tourist potential. Moreover, the country has failed to modernise our arts and cultural practices to appeal to a worldwide market, alienating many prospective visitors. Nigeria's diversification strives to expand its economy outside of oil and gas extraction to enhance work and earning opportunities (Joseph-Raji, 2017; Ichime et al., 2024). Nigeria has immense tourist potential, especially given its beautiful and diversified landscapes, but it lacks enough infrastructure to sustain and develop the tourism industry (Adesina, 2020).

Tourism has become one of the world's fastest-expanding sectors (Hilton, 2023). This expansion has been fueled by advances in the travel industry and a growing holiday culture. Nigeria should then be able to carve out a position in global tourism owing to its enriched geographical terrain, which includes coastal beaches, highlands, historic landmarks, wildlife, and a diversified culture.

Tourism development in Nigeria cannot be accomplished without the combined efforts and investment commitments of a public-private partnership, with significant contributions from rural areas and state governments (Abubakar, 2014). It is possible that popular tourist spots like Bauchi's Yankari Games Reserves, Taraba's Mambilla Plateau, and Cross River's Obudu Mountain Resort would be improved to meet international standards. The tourism market is worldwide, yet states may carve out niches for travelers with different and unique interests. For example, Taraba State and the Obudu area of Cross River, which offer magnificent mountainous charms, might develop a tourism niche centred on mountain climbing. Meanwhile, Bauchi State might restore wildlife to Yankari to lure safari enthusiasts. Tourism's job impact extends beyond metropolitan regions to rural villages that contain tourist attractions and artifacts. The influence of the Obudu Cattle Ranch in Cross Rivers State on the economies of the neighboring towns is a notable illustration of this.

According to Sesan (2017), factors such as insecurity, lack of proper management, multiple government taxes, and a lack of infrastructure at most tourist sites are fundamental problems that hinder tourism in Nigeria. According to Naluba and Goddy (2020), the government is not paying adequate attention to tourism, which constitutes a significant setback to the development of tourism in Nigeria. Again, tourists perceive the Nigerian tourism sector badly because of the continued infrastructure dilapidation. Over time, Nigeria has faced many security challenges, such as terrorism, robberies, kidnappings and so on, according to the research (Nwagbala and Engr, 2022). All these contribute to Nigeria's problems in the tourism

sector, as no tourist or visitor would want to visit a country where they would not feel safe.

Since tourism is a crucial source of economic development for nations worldwide, it creates efficient backward and forward connections with the economy as a whole (Kanagavel and Thilagaraj, 2017). The thrust of this study is that while wealthier countries constitute a larger share of worldwide tourism, many developing nations have recognised that tourism brings significant benefits; nevertheless, only emerging nations with sufficient competence and tourism-sustaining infrastructure can establish their tourist businesses and receive related profits. As a result, most emerging nations' economies must expand. Many studies have demonstrated the impact of tourism on developed economies across the globe (Baloch et al., 2022; Wahab et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). However, few studies have explored how tourism can bring socioeconomic development in a developing economy like Nigeria. Hence, this study critically examines tourism and its impact on socioeconomic development in Nigeria.

Study objectives

The following research objectives guide the study:

- 1) To ascertain tourism's role in Nigeria's socioeconomic development.
- 2) To identify specific challenges that prevent tourism growth in Nigeria.
- 3) To proffer plausible solutions to the challenges that prevent the growth of tourism in Nigeria.

2. Review of literature

2.1. History of tourism in Nigeria

Nigeria offers diverse tourist attractions, including rivers, beaches, unique animals, untouched wilderness, new cities, and favourable climatic conditions. Traditional ways of living, rich handicrafts, and friendly Nigerians make it an attractive destination for visitors seeking exotic or adventurous experiences (Okafor et al., 2021). Nigeria's government grew reliant on crude oil exports after independence from Britain in 1960. Today, Nigeria is the world's sixth-largest crude oil exporter and the most populous country in Africa (Karmer, 2023). The population is evenly divided between Christians and Muslims, with a significant portion worshipping deities and spirits. Over 250 distinct ethnic groups exist, with some similarities. The popular tourism attractions of cultures, customs, and traditions—including their hallowed rhythms and places of worship—have been neglected throughout time, hampering the sector's expansion and development (Jemirade, 2021).

Nigeria's tourism history dates back to 1959, when the colonial administration established an advisory group on marketing. The Nigerian Tourist Association (NTA) was formed in 1962, funded by the government, and later became a member of the World Tourist Organization (WTO) (Jemirade, 2021). After several years of failure, the Nigeria Tourist Association was replaced with the Nigerian Tourist Board by the Federal Military Government with Decree No. 54 of 1976. The Ministry of Trade and Tourism replaced the Nigerian Tourist Board after it underwent a reorganization in 1989. Committees for tourism and state headquarters were divided into six zones. The

Nigerian Tourist Board, state governments, and the federal government all carried out programs and initiatives related to tourism development (Jemirade, 2021).

The Nigerian Tourist Board was replaced on 14 December 1992 by the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation, which was established under Decree 81. From establishing the ad hoc committee in 1957 until the Ministry of Trade and Tourism establishment, the Nigerian tourism sector has failed despite the nation's abundance of prospects and potential. The Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation is still the government body in charge of developing Nigeria's tourism industry. The failed tendency has continued today (Jemirade, 2021). Nigeria's tourist industry has struggled since 1960 due to oil earnings, limited resources, and climates. Countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have developed more successful tourism industries due to their moderate and desert climates. Despite Nigeria's limited success in tourism, opportunities remain for the country to capitalise on its potential. However, some cynics believe that Nigeria lacks tourist opportunities and that developing tourism will be challenging.

Despite some criticism and negativity, most people feel Nigeria's position may be turned around, provided the elements responsible for this failure are adequately investigated and addressed (Jemirade, 2021). No challenge is insurmountable, and the collapse of the Nigerian tourist sector is no exception. The Nigerian tourist business remains promising, with several chances to grow into an enviable, viable, and sustainable economy. The broader consequence of this research is that these thoroughly examined and discussed aspects may be investigated to uncover long-term solutions that can be used to establish a successful tourist business in Nigeria.

2.2. Challenges facing tourism development in Nigeria

The Nigerian tourist sector faces several challenges. Listed below are some significant problems outlined by Amanawa (2022).

Inadequate Infrastructure: Every country needs adequate roads, stable electricity, and drinkable water for tourism to flourish. In all three categories, Nigeria has fallen short of expectations. There will be limited transportation if the roads are poor. According to Rodrigue (2020), most of Nigeria's popular tourist spots are located in rural areas devoid of these essential services, and this deficiency is a significant turnoff for prospective travellers. The current infrastructure is similarly inadequately maintained because the majority of our tourist sites are poorly managed. While other tourist locations lack the necessities to guarantee visitors' comfort and enjoyment, the beaches are packed.

Terrorism and Security Issues: Over the years, Nigeria has grown to be associated with terrorism, robberies, and kidnapping. Nigeria's tourist problems have been made worse by these vices. Many nations have alerted their citizens about the dangers of travelling to Nigeria in the wake of previous instances. The abduction of about 276 girls from Chibok on 14 April 2014 and the kidnapping of 110 pupils from Dapchi on 19 February 2018 were widely reported by major newspapers, TV shows, and radio stations. The Nigeria Police Force reportedly announced on 26 February 2021 that at least 317 girls had been abducted from a school in Zamfara state; this was the second kidnapping in as many weeks, according to Aljazeera Media Network (Aljazeera,

2021). The National Gallery of Art, Kwiambana Forest Reserve, Kiyawa City Walls, Bakalori Dam, and more beautiful tourist sites can be found in Zamfara State. However, given the country's chronic instability, no rational individual would select such a state, depriving it of potential cash creation.

Insufficient Investment and Funding: In 2016, President Muhammadu Buhari's budgetary allotment to the Ministry of Arts and Tourism was criticised by Alhaji Lai Mohammed, the former minister of Information, culture, and Tourism, who labelled it "mere tokenism." (Ovuakporie, 2016). It is unsurprising that, despite its contribution to the GDP, tourism makes up less than 1.5% of Nigeria's economy, given our focus on oil and gas.

Air Travel Issues: Nigerian airports perform poorly compared to the average level of airports worldwide. Since airports are sometimes the first places foreign visitors encounter when arriving in a new nation, it is frustrating to see frequent poor service, unplanned flight delays and cancellations, increased ticket costs, and many other inconveniences. Corruption has become a bodily odour regularly linked with Nigeria throughout the years. This is owing to multiple incidents of high-level government corruption, theft of public funds, and budget manipulation.

Limited Air Routes: Nigeria has just a few airports, airlines, and air routes. As a result, few flights link the main cities of Nigeria to the rest of the world. Many domestic and international travellers avoid travelling by road in a country like Nigeria.

Putting the strategy into effect has always been a struggle. Alhaji Lai Mohammed, the Hon. Minister of Information, Culture, and Tourism, declared in 2016 that the government intends to build arts and crafts centres nationwide in the 774 local government districts. He said that all artefacts and portraits stolen from the ancient Benin Kingdom would be returned and sold overseas under an agreement between the federal government and the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom (Ovuakporie, 2016).

Health Care Concerns: The President and other members of the wealthy upper class frequently travel abroad for medical care. These individuals are primarily politicians. Foreigners who are discouraged from entering Nigeria are not rare. There is a persistent dread that when faced with an emergency, the nation may be unable to save a foreign person's life.

2.3. Tourism and socioeconomic development

In the last decade, tourism research has focused on the economic growth of less-developed nations (LDC) and peripheral and/or rural regions. Based on the widely held belief that economic growth generated by tourism naturally enhances the quality of life, academics and the general public agree that tourism may be a significant facilitator of socioeconomic development for many nations (Matarrita-Cascante, 2010). It is now acknowledged that the tourism industry may effectively contribute to growth. In keeping with this, tourism is one of the most significant social and economic developments of the modern era. Because more and more individuals enjoy travel-related activities, it is considered a large business and a social phenomenon (Westcott, 2015).

The tourism sector has contributed over 10% to the world gross domestic product (WGDP) and over 9% to worldwide employment, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Tourism has become a vital development element in industrialised and less developed countries. In other words, tourism is a catalyst of development and socioeconomic change. Thus, tourism is a tool for attaining social and economic development. It aids in the advancement and the redistribution of wealth within a community. It is also used to achieve the power necessary to achieve development. Attention is most frequently focused on less developed countries where tourism is a significant development instrument.

Tourism is considered an adequate source of income and employment (WTTC, 2021). According to Schubert (2011), tourism contributes significantly to foreign exchange revenues. It promotes local competitiveness and infrastructure investment, as well as the growth of other economic sectors, which may, in turn, promote technological and human capital development. While tourism impacts several domains and parts of the community, it is also vulnerable to various effects, such as the seasonal nature of tourism in many places. That is, tourism is a seasonal industry that only responds to the entrance of tourists each season. As a result, it influences money flows and employment levels, potentially undermining tourism's development function.

2.4. Neo-liberalism theory

Over time, Neo-liberalism has been considered a revision of liberalism, thus the name 'new liberalism'. The concept promotes free market economics by limiting government intervention and cutting spending on social services. It proposes the privatisation of public assets and emphasises the role of the media in society. The concept also highlights the significance of communication technologies in increasing efficiency and profitability (Manning, 2022). In simpler terms, it is an ideology that emphasises that better economic and social development may be accomplished in a free society when government interference is decreased, government expenditure and taxes are cut, and the government does not have firm control over the market. Neoliberalism is not opposed to all forms of government intervention. However, it would prefer to see it used only when required to promote free markets and free entrepreneurship (Manning, 2022).

Neoliberalism has a significant impact on the tourism industry in different ways. For instance, it has led to the commercialisation of tourism, which is viewed as a commodity to be bought and sold. Additionally, neoliberalism has led to the privatisation of tourism services, resulting in the growth of multinational tourism corporations (Onyima, 2016). Neoliberalism has also led to the deregulation of the tourism industry, which has resulted in the liberation of tourism markets. This has made it easier for tourism businesses to operate across national borders. Moreover, neoliberalism has led to the growth of tourism infrastructure, which has resulted in the development of new tourism products and services (Adesina, 2020).

Tourism, particularly environmental tourism, both creates and conceals capitalism's tensions. This is due to its reliance on developing fresh sources of accumulation from the crises it causes. Marketing portrays nature-based tourism as a "win-win" resolution to the tension between the depletion of natural resources and

ongoing economic growth. This is made possible by a process known as the “liberalisation of nature,” which separates the parts that makeup ecosystems and makes it possible to transform them into new commodities (Duffy, 2015).

The Neo-liberal global tourism strategy has been proven to have severe constraints and potential risks for local populations, especially regarding privatising leisure, labour, and natural resources. Scholars from various professions have attempted to promote other ways to shield tourism from influences, with the shared economy being one of the most recent. However, it has been discovered that even the shared economy is not immune to market excesses. Residents and tourists are suggested to work together to recover a non-market world as a foundation for tourism initiatives. This may be done through a social value agenda alongside global communities working together to protect public goods and individuals (Timothy, 2019).

The Neo-liberal tourism model seeks profit at any cost, with little regard for local people, communities, or the natural environment. It serves as the foundation for the significant profitable part of the sector, affecting humanitarian activities such as “volunteer tourism” (Timothy, 2019). According to Liverman and Vilas (2006), Neo-liberalism has been linked to the following: payments for environmental services; privatisation; the transfer of environmental management to local or nongovernmental organisations; and the commercialisation and privatisation of unowned, government-owned, or common property resources like forests, water, and nature. Neo-liberal principles imported from developed world economies like Europe, Japan, and North America have governed the Nigerian economy (Akhaine, 2016). The reasons for Nigeria’s adoption of Neo liberalism include lowering trade barriers, expanding the involvement of the private sector, and shifting the country’s economic policy away from import substitution and toward the promotion of exports (Egharevba, 2008).

Tourism generates jobs and cash for the local communities through the money earned by game reserves and the entrance of tourists from overseas. For example, it was discovered that the Obudu Ranch Resort has had an influence on the people’s household income and that despite the quick expansion of the tourist facility in the region, the people are benefiting from tourism development in terms of sustainability (Eni-Ofem, 2018). Also, Lekki Conservation Center in Lagos, Nigeria, has contributed socioeconomically through conservation, the wise use of natural resources, and a close version of ecotourism, which have emerged as some of the most recent prospects for revenue production and contributing to the economic well-being of host communities from the natural environment surrounding them. At the same time, ecotourism reduces negative environmental consequences and safeguards valuable resources. The financial and social impact of the Lekki Conservation Centre for its host community in Lagos State suggested policies for fostering ecotourism (Asapokhai, 2020).

3. Research methods

3.1. Study design

A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for this study, using a mixed qualitative and quantitative research methodology. The research instruments include a structured questionnaire administered to the tourists and an interview guide

for the operators of tourist centres in Lagos State, Nigeria. The choice of Lagos for this study stems from the State being the country's most populous and commercial nerve centre. It is one of the first contact points for foreigners entering the country and houses many tourist and recreational centres.

3.2. Study location/area

Five tourist centres were selected for this study, including Lekki Conservation Centre, Terra Kulture, Lekki Arts and Craft Market, Vivid Exclusive Art Gallery, and New Afrika Shrine.

3.2.1. Lekki conservation centre

Lekki Conservation Centre, or LCC, is a well-known natural attraction in Lagos, Nigeria. More famously, it is home to Africa's longest canopy bridge. Lekki Conservation Centre is home to a variety of plant life and wildlife. It plays a vital role in preserving the region's environment and ecosystem. The Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) founded the Lekki Conservation Centre (LCC) in 1990 to conserve Africa's varied urban natural parks (See **Figure 1**). It intends to create a natural environment for plants and animals, addressing the urbanisation of these regions. The center is acknowledged as the Nigerian Conservation Foundation's flagship project, protecting rare biodiversity and ecological, scenic, scientific, and recreational qualities in Nigeria's coastal area. It is the only actively protected area in Lagos State and a primary tourist site, having been designated as one of the state's exceptional places and remarkable interest monuments.



Figure 1. Lekki conservation centre (LCC).

3.2.2. Terra kulture

Terra Kulture Arts and Studios was founded in 2003 to promote Nigerian languages, arts, and culture. For its 11-year history, the group has staged over 200 art exhibitions, plays, and language workshops. One of just two art auction houses in Nigeria, Terra Kulture established the Terra Kulture Auction House in 2009. The centre includes an art gallery, an arena, a multipurpose theatre, a snack cafe, a reading

and documentation centre, a Nigerian language and craft school, and an art gallery. Terra Kulture is a significant cultural centre in Lagos, Nigeria (See **Figure 2**).



Figure 2. Terra culture.

3.2.3. Lekki arts and crafts market

The Lekki Arts and Crafts Market in Lagos, Nigeria, exhibits various African arts and crafts. Nigeria's most prominent art market offers various things such as paintings, sculptures, woodwork, fashion accessories, furniture, metalworks, and locally created textiles. The market is a famous tourist destination, and it gets positive feedback from tourists across all media (See **Figure 3**).



Figure 3. Lekki arts and crafts market.

3.2.4. Vivid exclusive art gallery

Vivid Exclusive Art Gallery is a Lagos-based art gallery that opened in July 2017. It aspires to foster a fantastic interaction between artists and collectors while expanding the practice and experience of Nigerian contemporary art worldwide. The gallery offers distinct, creative programs that showcase the best in local and international contemporary art. It also provides artists and art fans convenient access

to ongoing development projects. The Gallery, located in the Lagos neighbourhood of Lekki, is home to a diverse spectrum of artists and artistic genres (See **Figure 4**).



Figure 4. Vivid exclusive art gallery.

3.2.5. New afrika shrine

The New Afrika Shrine is an outdoor performance venue in Ikeja, Lagos. It is the setting for the annual Felabration music event. It is the successor to the previous Afrika Shrine, built in 1970 by Fela Kuti and burned down in 1977. It is now administered by Femi Kuti (eldest son of Fela Kuti) and Yeni Anikulapo-Kuti. The New Afrika Shrine has Fela picture galleries and music performances by Femi and Seun Kuti, making it a tourist destination (See **Figure 5**).



Figure 5. New afrika shrine.

3.3. Sample size, sampling techniques and research procedure

Due to the lack of a sample frame for the study respondents, the convenient sampling method was adopted to determine the sample size, in which 250 respondents were selected. The sample of this study involves the managers/organisers of the tourist sites, with tourists as the key respondents. Also, the purposive sampling method was adopted for the qualitative aspect of the work, with in-depth interviews conducted with 10 operators/managers of tourist centres in Lagos. The reason is that 10 respondents, 2 management staff from each tourist site (male and female), will be able to give

adequate knowledge and insight on the subject matter. Data were collected by the researcher with the support of a research assistant. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents upon their visit to the tourist site, and in-depth interviews, which lasted between 30–45 min, were conducted with each respondent and their various offices.

3.4. Method of data analysis

Descriptive statistics of frequency distribution tables and percentages were used to analyse the quantitative data. In contrast, findings from the in-depth interview were analysed using thematic analysis to triangulate the results. The thematic analysis aims to find themes or intriguing or essential patterns in data, using these themes to address the research or make a point. An excellent thematic analysis examines and interprets the data rather than just summarising it. Thematic analysis is famous for being effective in research questions and objectives (Mihas, 2022). The frequency distribution table and chart will be used in descriptive statistics, while regression analysis will be used in inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used to evaluate the data acquired for this study.

3.5. Ethical consideration

The study adhered strictly to the ethical issues of anonymity, voluntariness and malfeasance. It also ensured that informed consent was communicated to the respondents, and they had the choice to be part of the study or otherwise. Verbal/oral consent was received from each respondent before the survey. This is due to the large number of respondents involved, making written consent impossible for each respondent. Also, since the study portends no harm to the respondents or the tourism sites, verbal consent is deemed suitable and appropriate for the study.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Table 1. Shows the demographic characteristics of the tourists in Lagos state, Nigeria.

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	87	40%
	Female	132	60%
Total		219	100%
Age	18–24 years	55	25%
	25–34years	108	49%
	35–44years	44	20%
	45years and above	12	6%
Total		219	100%

Table 1. (Continued).

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Marital status	Single	88	40%
	Married	114	52%
	Prefer not to say	17	8%
Total		219	100%
Highest Educational Attainment	Primary	15	7%
	Secondary	96	44%
	Tertiary	101	46%
	Others	7	3%
Total		219	100%
Employment Status	Employed	152	69%
	Unemployed	41	19%
	Retired	16	7%
	I prefer not to say	10	5%
	Total	219	100%

Source: Field survey, 2023.

The data provided provides information about the gender distribution among tourists. These figures indicate that among the given population of tourists and organizers of the tourist sites, the majority (60%) are female, while 40% are male. The provided data presents the age distribution among tourists. The above information shows that the largest age group within the given population is 25–34 years, representing 49% of the total. The age groups of 18–24 years, 35–44 years, and 45 years and above follow in descending order, with 25%, 20%, and 6% respectively. Most tourists (52%) are married, with 114 individuals. The single tourists comprise 40% of the population, with 88 individuals. A small proportion (8%) falls under the “Prefer not to say,” consisting of 17 individuals.

The highest educational attainment among tourists is mainly secondary certificates and tertiary degrees, accounting for 44% and 46% of the population, with 96 and 101 individuals, respectively. A smaller portion (7%) holds a primary school leaving certificate, comprising 15 individuals. The remaining 3% represents individuals with other educational qualifications, totaling 7. The provided data presents the employment status of the tourists. Among tourists and organisers of the tourist sites, 19% are unemployed, with 41 individuals. A more significant proportion (69%) falls under the employed category, comprising 152 individuals. The remaining 7% are retired, totalling 16 individuals (See **Table 1**).

4.2. Analysis of research objectives

4.2.1. Obj 1: To ascertain the role of tourism on the socio-economic development in Nigeria

Table 2 provides information on how respondents to a series of inquiries about their views on tourism answered those inquiries. I believe that tourism is essential to improving the socio-economic development of Lagos State. The following

percentages of people responded to the statement: 35% strongly agreed, 42% agreed, 10% were neutral, 7% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed. According to most respondents (77%) who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, tourism is crucial to advancing socioeconomic development in Lagos State. This might mean that a significant fraction of participants know the potential benefits of tourism to the state's economy and overall well-being.

Table 2. Tourism's role on Nigeria's socio-economic development ($N = 219$).

S/N	Opinion	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1.	I believe tourism is important for improving socio-economic development in Lagos state	77 (35%)	93 (42%)	22 (10%)	15 (7%)	12 (6%)	219 (100%)
2.	I believe well-managed tourist centers are important in saving a nation's image and attracting more tourists	72 (33%)	99 (45%)	21 (10%)	11 (5%)	16 (7%)	219 (100%)
3.	I believe tourism is a method or means of building a nation's appreciation for its cultural heritage	65 (30%)	110 (50%)	10 (4%)	15 (7%)	19 (9%)	219 (100%)
4.	believe tourism can be used to protect national heritage	70 (32%)	95 (43%)	20 (9%)	19 (9%)	15 (7%)	219 (100%)
5.	believe tourism is a robust sector of the socio-economic institution	61 (28%)	102 (47%)	15 (7%)	21 (10%)	20 (9%)	219 (100%)
6.	I believe tourism is sustainable in Lagos state	62 (28%)	93 (42%)	10 (4%)	26 (12%)	28 (13%)	219 (100%)
7.	Tourism should be taken seriously in developing countries.	78 (36%)	114 (52%)	14 (6%)	6 (3%)	10 (4%)	219 (100%)

Note: SA: Strongly Agree. A: Agree. N: Not Decided. D: Disagree. SD: Strongly Disagree.

The respondents concurred that maintaining a nation's reputation and attracting more tourists depend on well-managed tourism sites. 10% of respondents are indifferent, 33% strongly agree, 45% agree, 5% strongly disagree, and 7% disagree. Most respondents (78%) agreed or strongly agreed that keeping up-to-date tourist destinations is crucial for enhancing a nation's reputation and attracting more tourists. This illustrates the perceived importance of effective management in creating a positive first impression and attracting clients. The reaction to the statement "I believe tourism is a method or means of building a nation's appreciation for its cultural heritage" was primarily positive, with 30% strongly agreeing, 50% agreeing, 4% neutral, 7% disagreeing, and 9% strongly disapproving. The vast majority (80%) of respondents concurred (strongly concurred) or strongly concurred (agreed) that tourism may encourage a nation's citizens to cherish its cultural heritage. This suggests that participants may know tourism's possible benefits for preserving and promoting cultural identity.

"I believe that tourism can help preserve our national heritage". The statement garnered a favourable response, with 32% strongly agreeing, 43% agreeing, 9% neutral, 9% disagreeing, and 7% strongly disapproving. With 28% strongly agreeing, 42% agreeing, 4% neutral, 12% disagreeing, and 13% strongly disagreeing, respondents' responses to the statement "I believe tourism is sustainable in Lagos State" were varied. While most respondents (70%) either agreed or strongly agreed that tourism is sustainable in Lagos State, a sizeable percentage (25%) also voiced doubt or disagreement to some extent. This shows a need to examine the area's sustainable tourism elements more closely.

Tourism in poor nations has to be addressed seriously. 36% strongly agree, 52% agree, 6% are neutral, 3% disagree, and 4% strongly disagree. This statement garnered a mainly positive reaction. The vast majority (88%) agreed vehemently or strongly that developing nations should give priority to tourism. This suggests an understanding of the significance of tourism as a potential engine of economic development and prosperity in such countries.

Interview response on the role of tourism on the socio-economic development in Nigeria

One research question asked about the relationship between tourism and socioeconomic development in Nigeria. From the respondent's responses, tourism is a big business due to the ever-increasing number of people who enjoy travel-related experiences. It is a good source of socio-economic development; it boosts the economy by helping with job opportunities and the economy. They believe it is a result of the revenue it brings in. The respondents also believe that tourism contributes more to the economy and society in terms of development. Below are some of the excerpts from the responses buttressing the above assertions.

This respondent contributed to the fact that he believes 100% that life without tourist centres is boring and that tourism leads to socioeconomic development. His view is as follows:

Of course, I believe 100% that life would be boring without tourist centres. See, like our venue now, people come here to unwind. The music alone brings joy not only to our venue but to other tourist centres, too. Tourism alone is life; without tourism, there will be big problems. The foreign exchange alone from tourism makes much money.

(RESPONDENT 1/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

Another respondent also said that tourist centres promote the socioeconomic development of the state;

Regarding tourist centres in Lagos state, we could say that they promote the state's socioeconomic development.

(RESPONDENT 2/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

Another participant, the market chairman/ manager, said that tourism does not bring in revenue as fast as oil. However, it still generates revenue and promotes socioeconomic development by providing employment opportunities.

Of course, art holds economy, but the money does not come like oil money that comes in a bomb, no. Art money comes like water; it will drop small and minor and continue. I will tell you that art creates more employment than oil, but people do not know.

(RESPONDENT 3/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

Another respondent, the restaurant manager of Terra Kulture, says that their tourist centre is adding to the GDP of Lagos, thereby bringing in socio-economic development.

Sure, I will always use my company as an example; our existence in Lagos has brought many visitors into the state and indirectly has added to the GDP of Lagos because we also pay our taxes from the revenue we have gathered here. We have done so much and contributed to the state's growth.

(RESPONDENT 4/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

Another respondent is saying that the taxes the Lagos State government is collecting from his tourist centre are enough to generate much income for the government and that because people from all over the world come to his tourist centre, that is bringing revenue into the state, hence bringing revenue.

They do; some revenues come into Lagos State. Okay, for example, there is a five per cent Lagos State Consumption Tax that businesses, especially in the type of businesses we do here, collect from customers that come and are remitted to the government. That's income generation from the government. We have had many tourists from all over the world coming here alone; they have experienced more about the culture and patronised other businesses in Lagos, which helps generate revenue for Lagos State and puts it on the map.

(RESPONDENT 5/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

4.2.2. Obj 2: To identify specific challenges that prevent the growth of tourism in Nigeria

Participants' thoughts on the most pressing challenges facing the tourism sector are shown in **Table 3**. "Transportation networks alone are not enough" 25% of respondents strongly agreed, 42% agreed, 11% agreed but had second thoughts, 12% disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed with the statement. A sizable portion (67%) agreed or strongly agreed that the tourism business has insufficient transportation networks. This demonstrates that participants consider a lack of adequate transportation infrastructure a critical problem inhibiting the expansion of the tourist sector.

Table 3. Challenges that prevent tourism growth in Nigeria ($N = 219$).

S/N	Challenges (Problems)	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1	There are insufficient transportation networks	55 (25%)	92 (42%)	25 (11%)	26 (12%)	21 (10%)	219 (100%)
2	I have a high perception of insecurity, including issues of crime, terrorism, and civil unrest	46 (21%)	104 (47%)	26 (12%)	21 (10%)	22 (10%)	219 (100%)
3	There are insufficient and substandard accommodation facilities	58 (26%)	98 (45%)	22 (10%)	20 (9%)	21 (10%)	219 (100%)
4	There is limited access to finance and funding options for tourism projects	56 (26%)	107 (49%)	18 (8%)	21 (10%)	17 (8%)	219 (100%)
5	There is a lack of adequately trained personnel	64 (29%)	92 (42%)	22 (10%)	22 (10%)	19 (9%)	219 (100%)
6	There are inconsistent or unstable government policies, including regulation changes, taxation, etc.	68 (31%)	91 (42%)	20 (9%)	22 (10%)	18 (8%)	219 (100%)

Note: SA: Strongly Agree. A: Agree. N: Not Decided. D: Disagree. SD: Strongly Disagree.

Those who responded positively to the statement "I have a high perception of insecurity, including issues of crime, terrorism, and civil unrest" were 21% strongly agree, 47% agree, 12% neutral, 10% disagree, and 10% strongly disagree. According to the majority of respondents (68%), crime, terrorism, and civil disturbance significantly increase people's feelings of insecurity. This shows a genuine concern for security risks and potential travel consequences.

“The lodging options are inadequate and of poor quality”. The percentages of respondents to the statement are as follows: 10% strongly disagreed, 9% disagreed, 45% agreed, 10% agreed but were unsure, and 26% agreed. The majority (71%) agreed or strongly agreed that the tourism industry lacks adequate high-quality hotel choices. This may indicate that to improve the visitor experience, more acceptable accommodation alternatives are required.

The responses to the claim that “There is limited access to finance and funding options for tourism projects” had mixed responses: 26% strongly agreed, 49% agreed, 8% were neutral, 10% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed. Most people (75%) agreed or strongly agreed that there are not many financial and financing options available for activities in the tourism business. This emphasises the tourism sector’s claimed financial challenges in raising the funds needed for development and growth.

Most respondents (29%) highly agreed, 42% agreed, 10% were neutral, 10% disagreed, and 9% strongly disapproved of the statement “There is a lack of adequately trained personnel” in response to it. The overwhelming majority of respondents (71%) agreed or strongly agreed that the tourism sector has a shortage of competent personnel. This demonstrates that the necessity for sponsoring training and development programs to improve the professionalism and skill levels of the workforce is widely acknowledged.

Governmental policies, including changes to laws and taxation, are erratic or unpredictable. The following percentages of people responded to the statement: 31% strongly agreed, 42% agreed, 9% were neutral, 10% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed. The majority (73%) agreed or strongly agreed that there is inconsistency or instability in the government’s policy regarding the tourism sector. This demonstrates that participants see policy inconsistency as a significant barrier that might generate uncertainty and obstruct the expansion of the tourism sector.

The participants’ concerns about the challenges the tourism sector faces—such as inadequate transportation networks, security, substandard housing alternatives, limited access to funding, a scarcity of skilled workers, and inconsistent government regulations—are evident in the remarks, which serve as a summary. If these problems are adequately remedied, it may help the neighbourhood’s tourism industry grow and prosper.

Interview response on the challenges that prevent the growth of tourism in Nigeria

The research objective was to identify specific challenges preventing Nigeria’s tourism growth. The respondents’ responses indicated that they faced issues such as power outages, fuel prices, inadequate transport networks, etc. Below are some of the excerpts from the responses buttressing the above assertions:

The tax policy is not in our favour. NEPA, for instance, the bills we get from them and taxes the charge. The business runs on diesel; we do not see the NEPA light, and even when we get it, it kills the business.

(RESPONDENT 1/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

The first and second respondents complained about the same things or challenges they face: their common enemy, the power supply.

The major challenge here is the power outages; fuel is expensive. Furthermore, NEPA hardly brings light.

(RESPONDENT 2/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

The third respondent, the village chairman of the Lekki Arts and Craft Market, complained about how their only issue is slow business.

The only thing I can consider as a challenge here is that the business is slow. Some artists sell their art here as a source of living, so when people come around, they support the tourism aspect of this place and forget the business aspect and problems like unemployment come around.

(RESPONDENT 3/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

The fourth respondent said this:

I do not know that there are challenges. I can say the government needs to do better.

(RESPONDENT 4/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

The last respondent made the same complaint as the first two respondents.

There are several challenges; for one, doing business in Nigeria is difficult. We also do not have enough power, diesel costs are expensive, and we struggle to pay ridiculous prices to the government.

(RESPONDENT 5/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

4.2.3. Obj 3: To proffer plausible solutions to the challenges that prevent the growth of tourism in Nigeria

The data in **Table 4** illustrates how respondents felt about various strategies for resolving challenges in the tourism business. “Rigid security measures must be put in place, including increased police presence, surveillance systems, and community policing initiatives” The statement had a favourable response, with 31% strongly agreeing, 42% agree, 8% neutral, 11% disagreeing, and 8% strongly disagreeing. The majority (73%) agreed or strongly agreed that strict security measures, such as increased police presence, surveillance technologies, and community policing initiatives, must be implemented. This implies that ensuring their safety and security is imperative to attract and retain visitors.

Table 4. Plausible solutions to the challenges that prevent the growth of tourism in Nigeria.

S/N	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1	There is a need to implement robust security measures, such as increased police presence, surveillance systems, and community policing initiatives.	68 (31%)	91 (42%)	18 (8%)	25 (11%)	17 (8%)	219 (100%)
2	There is a need to utilise various channels, including social media and travel websites, to create awareness and attract more tourists.	58 (26%)	101 (46%)	20 (9%)	23 (11%)	17 (8%)	219 (100%)
3	There is a need to encourage private-sector investments in the hospitality industry.	68 (31%)	94 (43%)	16 (7%)	27 (12%)	14 (7%)	219 (100%)
4	There is a need for the government to create favourable policies and provide financial support, such as low-interest loans and grants.	61 (28%)	104 (47%)	18 (8%)	19 (9%)	17 (8%)	219 (100%)
5	Ensure transparency, streamline regulations, and avoid frequent changes in price and taxation.	64 (29%)	92 (42%)	22 (10%)	22 (10%)	19 (9%)	219 (100%)

Note: SA: Strongly Agree. A: Agree. N: Not Decided. D: Disagree. SD: Strongly Disagree.

With 26% strongly agreeing, 46% agreeing, 9% neutral, 11% disagreeing, and 8% strongly disagreeing, respondents’ opinions on the statement “There is a need to utilise various channels, including social media and travel websites, to create awareness and attract more tourists” were divided. Most people (72%) agreed or

strongly agreed that leveraging various platforms, including social media and travel websites, is crucial for increasing awareness and luring more visitors. This may suggest that participants know the importance of effective marketing and promotion strategies in increasing the number of visitors.

With 31% highly agreeing, 43% agreeing, 7% neutral, 12% disagreeing, and 7% strongly disagreeing, the statement “There is a need to encourage private sector investments in the hospitality industry” was warmly received. Most (74%) agreed that supporting private-sector investment in the hotel industry is essential. This exemplifies how crucial the private sector’s contribution is to developing new facilities, boosting standards, and developing tourism.

“The government must create enabling laws and provide tools, like grants and low-interest loans,” The statement had a favorable response, with 28% strongly agreeing, 47% agreeing, 8% neutral, 9% disagreeing, and 8% strongly disagreeing. The majority (75%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the government should create kind laws and provide financial aid, such as grants and low-interest loans, to the tourism sector. This demonstrates the importance society places on the role of the government in fostering favorable settings.

The statement “ensure transparency, streamline regulations, and avoid frequent changes in price and taxation” had a favorable response, with 29% of respondents strongly agreeing, 42% agreeing, 10% neutral, 10% disagreeing, and 9% strongly disagreeing. The majority (71%) agreed strongly or strongly that providing openness, streamlining laws, and avoiding frequent changes in pricing and taxing were vital. This illustrates how essential it is for participants in the tourism sector to conduct business in a secure and predictable environment.

Interview response on solutions to the challenges that prevent the growth of tourism in Nigeria

The research objective was to proffer solutions to the challenges preventing Nigeria’s tourism growth. From the respondents’ responses, they provided solutions like the government should do better and so much more. Below are some of the excerpts from the responses buttressing the above assertions:

I honestly believe the government should work on the power supply for Nigeria, especially in Lagos, where businesses are everywhere. Moreover, tourist centers like mine require a lot of light to operate.

(RESPONDENT 1/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

I believe the best solution right now for us is for the government to fix the light issues in Lagos.

(RESPONDENT 2/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

The first two respondents discussed the exact solution to the same problem: a power outage. The third respondent spoke about how creating awareness can also help with the tourism business as it will be a means of advertising.

People should learn and try to support businesses to reduce unemployment, and that is where we come in now; we also have to create awareness just so that the tourism business will bloom.

(RESPONDENT 3/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

This respondent is saying the same thing as the first two respondents.

I said it before and will say it again: The government needs to improve. The government still has work to do, whether security, roads, or NEPA.

(RESPONDENT 4/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

I believe the government should fix inflation so the diesel price will drop. It is not profitable to have a business in an unstable economy.

(RESPONDENT 5/MALE/TOURIST CENTER MANAGER)

This last respondent says that the government should fix the economy first so that other aspects of society, like tourism, will be more stable.

5. Discussions of findings

In the work of Matarrita-Cascante (2010), tourism, according to academics and the general public, maybe a significant facilitator of socioeconomic development for many nations, based on the commonly held belief that economic growth caused by tourism naturally improves the quality of life. The findings illuminate tourism's role in Nigeria's socioeconomic development. The findings highlight the significance of tourism in advancing socioeconomic development in Lagos State. Participants recognise that tourism has the potential to support economic growth, the creation of jobs, and an increase in living conditions. They also understand how crucial well-run tourist sites are to improving a nation's reputation and luring additional tourists.

In the work of Onyima (2016), Nigeria's historic resources, derived from human processes, are a source of identity and living traditions. These resources include physical and intangible natural and cultural items representing civilizations and traditions. Physical resources include material cultural representations like scenery, monuments, and structures, while intangible resources include immaterial expressions like traditional ways of life, social customs, festivals, music, and handicrafts. In the findings, participants are also aware of how crucial tourism is to protecting the nation's history and promoting respect for cultural treasures. They consider the tourism sector robust and capable of fostering economic diversification, job creation, and revenue production.

The World Travel and Tourism Council states that using tourism as a tool can help achieve social and economic development. It contributes to progress and the redistribution of wealth within a society. It is also used to achieve the power necessary to achieve growth, especially in less developed countries. In this work, participants largely concur that tourism should be taken seriously in developing countries due to its potential to promote economic growth and lessen poverty. These findings demonstrate that the public is aware of and supportive of the positive socioeconomic effects of tourism. They stress how tourism may promote economic growth and cultural preservation, create jobs, and enhance the nation's reputation. To fully enjoy these benefits, stakeholders must address the issues above, implement sound solutions, and place a high focus on sustainable tourism practices in Nigeria.

The results shed light on the issues preventing Nigeria's tourist industry from expanding. The talks uncovered several obstacles preventing Nigeria's tourist industry from expanding. If the roads are bad, movement will be restricted. The bulk of Nigeria's well-known tourist spots are located in rural regions that lack these essential utilities (Rodrigue, 2020), and this scarcity has proved to be a substantial impediment

to potential visitors. Accessibility and connection to tourism locations are restricted by these factors, which include poor transit networks. The feeling of unease, which provides for worries about crime and civil upheaval, has a detrimental effect on Nigeria's reputation as a secure tourism destination.

The discussions examined many solutions to the issues preventing the growth of Nigeria's tourism sector. The discussion covered the critical solutions to the problems plaguing Nigeria's tourism industry. Participants emphasized the need for robust security measures to make the environment safer for tourists. It was believed to be crucial to employ a range of venues for awareness and advertising, such as social media and travel websites, to attract more visitors.

It has been demonstrated that promoting private sector investments in the hospitality industry substantially impacts the upgrading of accommodations and the overall tourism experience. People believed favorable government policies and financial aid, such as grants and loans with low interest rates, were necessary to draw in investments and encourage the expansion of tourism. Last but not least, it was believed that ensuring transparency and simplifying the law while avoiding frequent changes may result in a stable and advantageous business climate. Implementing these suggestions might make Nigeria's tourism sector easier to grow and flourish.

Neoliberalism, the economic model or philosophy that underpins this study, emphasises that less government control over the economy, lower taxes and spending, and less government regulation all lead to more significant social and financial advancement in a free society. Neo-liberalism does not oppose all government intervention. It does, however, want it restricted to the times when it is required to uphold free markets and free enterprise (Manning, 2022). These findings suggest that a multimodal approach—one that involves enhancing security, effective marketing and promotion, integrating the private sector, supportive governmental policies, and simplifying laws—is necessary to overcome the challenges facing Nigeria's tourism industry. These suggestions will help Nigeria's tourism sector develop to its full potential and attract more visitors.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This study investigates tourism's impact on socio-economic development in Lagos, Nigeria, and the findings reveal how crucial tourism is to the socioeconomic development of Lagos State, Nigeria. Most participants concurred that tourism is crucial for advancing the economy, creating employment, and enhancing living conditions. They emphasized the importance of carefully maintaining tourist spots to enhance the nation's reputation and lure more visitors. To foster economic growth and reduce poverty, participants underlined the need to prioritize developing nations—including Nigeria—and provide funding for tourism. They recognized the value of the tourist industry to the socioeconomic system. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Facilitate access to finance and funding: To attract investments and give access to financing for tourist projects, infrastructure development, and capacity building, favorable regulations should be established, as well as financial support in the form of grants, incentives, and low-interest loans.

- 2) Enhance transportation infrastructure: You may solve the issue of insufficient transportation networks and make tourist destinations more convenient for visitors by investing in expanding and improving road, rail, and air links.
- 3) Reinforce security measures: Increase police presence, install surveillance systems, and implement community policing initiatives to alleviate tourist concerns about safety and create a safe environment.
- 4) Promote destination awareness: Promote Nigeria's tourism potential by promoting its distinctive attractions and experiences using a variety of platforms, such as social media, travel websites, and destination marketing campaigns.
- 5) Enhance accommodation facilities: Encourage private sector investments in the hospitality sector and boost the quality and quantity of lodgings to satisfy the rising demand from visitors and address the issue of inadequate and subpar lodging facilities.
- 6) Preserve and protect cultural and natural heritage: Ensure sustainable tourism practices that respect and maintain cultural and natural assets by putting in place measures to protect and preserve national heritage, including historical sites, wildlife reserves, and traditional communities.
- 7) Foster collaboration and partnerships: Encourage cooperation between governmental institutions, businesses, local communities, and international organizations so that they may pool their resources and talents to create and promote tourism.

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